

## Adoptions Task Force Update

October 18, 2002

### Talking Points for Congressional Briefing

#### PROGRESS REPORT

- With additional resources from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and U.S. Department of State (DOS) on the ground in Cambodia, as well as sufficient time to conclude field investigations, the Task Force was able to clear a large number of cases at recent meetings with the Cambodian Ministry of Social Affairs, Labor, Vocational Skills and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSALVY). Since the last congressional briefing on October 4, 2002 (at which time 32 of the 92 orphanage adoptions processed through MOSALVY and included in the expanded initiative had been cleared), two additional clearance meetings were held.
  - On October 14, 2002, 38 additional cases (involving 45 children) from the expanded initiative, plus two cases from the earlier initiative, were cleared. Around the same time, four court cases were approved by the Task Force to travel to Cambodia for their visa appointments.
  - At a meeting with MOSALVY today (October 18, 2002), an additional 17 cases (involving 19 children) were cleared. These prospective adoptive parents will be notified by Task Force members in Washington, DC today.
  - **Total: 87 of 92 orphanage cases in the expanded initiative have now cleared.**
- For those prospective adoptive parents whose cases have cleared, Giving and Receiving ceremonies (required under Cambodian law to finalize the adoption) were scheduled for October 18, October 22, October 24, and November 5. The Task Force was informed today that there will not be a ceremony during the week of October 28 (as originally anticipated) due to the unavailability of senior officials at MOSALVY and the Cambodian holiday celebrating the King's Birthday (October 30 – November 1, 2002).
- *Timeline:* All remaining cases will either be cleared upon resolution of pending investigative issues or the adverse information will be presented to the prospective adoptive parents by November 1, 2002. Because INS does not have a permanent presence in Cambodia, it will return its three detailed INS officers to their home location in Bangkok, Thailand. INS officers will continue to be available as needed in Cambodia via daily one-hour flights between Bangkok and Phnom Penh.
- During that time, however, the U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh will continue its diplomatic efforts to negotiate the final expansion of the special humanitarian initiative.

#### FINAL EXPANSION OF THE INITIATIVE

- The Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has indicated their willingness to cooperate in a final expansion of the special humanitarian initiative. On Monday, October 21 the US Embassy will meet with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to seek formal confirmation of such cooperation. As explained in the September 11, 2002 announcement and at the last congressional briefing, the proposed final phase of the initiative would include those prospective adoptive parents who filed an I-600A application by December 31, 2001 and who designated Cambodia by September 1, 2002. Additionally, a Cambodian child who is to be adopted must have been born on or before December 31, 2001. Additional details about the parameters of this proposal were distributed on October 3, 2002 via [cambodia.adoptions@usdoj.gov](mailto:cambodia.adoptions@usdoj.gov).

- *Process for dossier collection.* The Embassy will begin accepting dossiers on Wednesday, October 23, for the approximately 25 prospective adoptive parents who are eligible for the final expansion of the initiative and who the US Government is aware had committed to adopting a particular Cambodian child prior to December 31, 2001. The Task Force in Washington, DC will be contacting these 25 people early next week to confirm their inclusion and provide details about the dossier collection.
- Dossiers can be dropped off at the US Embassy in Phnom Penh between 2 and 4 p.m. each business day. A receipt for documents submitted will be provided. Dossiers should include a copy of the I-600A and supporting documents. The Embassy strongly encourages calling ahead to the Consular Section before dropping off dossiers. Callers should dial the Embassy switchboard (023-216-436) and ask for Ken Lyons or Tracy Taylor.
- The Consular Section will act only as a delivery point for documents. The Task Force will continue to review documents and communicate with families.
- It is difficult to estimate a timeline for the final expansion of the initiative at this time. Timelines will be made available to the Congressional Coalition on Adoption once the RGC formally agrees to the proposal, the details of the matching process are determined, and a greater sense of the number of prospective adoptive parents interested in this final expansion is known.
- The Task Force continues to gather information from prospective adoptive parents who allege eligibility under the parameters of the final expansion of the initiative.